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ABSTRACT

Studies of urban living and its consequences for education tend to focus on issues related to ethnic minority status and low economic status. There are problems, however, more critical to urban life than those faced by low status people in our cities. Continuity and change present problems in urban areas. Three broad categories which have special relevance for urban education are human diversity, human mobility and human and institutional rigidity. Due to these characteristics and to the political and economic climate, urban populations are diverse and mobile, and at the same time stereotypic and immobile. These populations vary with respect to their status (ethnicity, culture, class, sex) and their functions (language, cognitive style, affective response patterns, etc.). These differences have implications for the way in which educational opportunities are designed and delivered. Yet, these various groups are eventually held to similar mainstream standards despite the pluralistic nature of their reference groups. These populations seem to be in constant geographic movement within the city and into and out of the city. Between groups, though, movement is very limited and upward mobility is more a dream than a reality. In urban education, attention must be given to these and other aspects of urbanicity. (Author/WI)

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Toward a Conceptualization of Urban Education

Edmund W. Gordon

One of the areas in education that has received a great deal of attention in recent years is urban education. So recent is the concern under this rubric that the third edition of the *Encyclopedia of Educational Research* carries only one such index term, and it refers to an urban-rural comparison of the number of secondary schools. Nonetheless, the attention of educators has been progressively drawn to the challenges and opportunities posed by education in urban areas, as these communities have accounted for more and more of our population. In the last few decades, enrollment in urban schools has steadily increased. This shift in population; the large concentration of human, monetary, and other resources in these schools; the cultural/political/social influences of urban centers on the nation; and the problems attendant to these factors have resulted in the growing concern for urban education. However, despite the large amount of discussion and work on this subject, there is little clarity with respect to the question: of what does this domain of education consist?

Studies of urban living and its consequences for education tend to focus on issues related to ethnic minority status and low socioeconomic status. This emphasis is a reflection of the fact that the city is now where low status people are concentrated. It does not mean that there are not poor people or black people, Spanish-speaking people, and Native American people in the less highly populated areas (in fact, before 1930 these peoples were concentrated

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in the rural areas); but now the largest concentrations of these peoples and the largest numbers are in our cities. For example, in the early part of this century studies of black Americans focused primarily on rural areas because if one wanted to find black Americans in those days, that was where they were. In contrast, in the past two decades, investigators concerned with the problems of black people have had to turn to our great cities to find the largest concentrations, because of their shift from rural to urban living. Similarly, if one goes into the Native American ghettos of Brooklyn or Chicago, one will find the largest concentrations of Native Americans in our nation. We have more Indians in these two cities than we have on any single reservation in this country.

This population shift has led us to equate urban education with the problems of low status persons. However, there are problems more critical to urban life and certainly more crucially related to the future of our society than the problems faced by low status people in our cities. This is not to demean or underestimate the importance of ethnic discrimination or the importance of poverty in the lives of people. These are tremendously important issues, and society must do something about them. Rather, this is to suggest that professionals often greatly confuse the problems of education with the problems of these special populations. As a result, we may be doing a disservice to low status populations, to the concerned professions, and to the domains of minority education and urban education by treating the two as if they were synonymous.

The history of the human species has been marked by a continuous movement toward greater congregation, that is, toward the concentration of human beings in social collectives. This movement can be traced from the very episodic, random team efforts of early hominids at huntings; we can see it in the early food-gathering activities of man. We can trace it through the emergence of the family, the clan, and the tribal kinship relationships—all efforts directed at mutual protection, at mutual food gathering, at mutual food cultivation and territorial establishment. We can see this movement through the enslavement and control practiced by feudal lords and slaveholders. We can see it in the population concentrations made necessary by the Industrial Revolution. We can see it in the organized and cooperative enslavement and control practiced by the lords of capitalism, and even more recently by the lords of socialism. It continues in the cultural and ideological confluence made possible by modern communicative technology.

We have seen growth from villages to towns and from towns to cities. We have seen cities become metropolises, and those metropolises have now become large continuous metropolitan belts. We can identify a number of characteristics of this growing metropolitanization—an aspect of what we will call urbanicity.

Urban areas are characterized by large numbers of people, by high densities, by great diversity and heterogeneity of characteristics and concerns of people, by high degrees of mobility, a relatively high incidence of anonymity, by conflicting life-styles in close proximity, by cultural richness, by the concentration of human and material resources, by ease of communication and geographic mobility, and by the coexistence of fluidity and rigidity in institutional and personal behavior. This is just to name a few characteristics, all of which confront us with challenge and opportunity.

In discussing these, as they are both positive and negative, we tend to focus most of our attention on population magnitude and density. But while all these characteristics were originally associated primarily with magnitude and density, increasingly they are now associated with the complexities of modern technological societies. One of the important aspects of all or most of the characteristics we associate with urbanicity, or urban living, is that they are a part of the experience of almost all people in our country—thanks to modern communication and transportation.

Urbanicity as a societal condition is most evident from the fact that better than half of our population lives in urban areas, and the remainder of the population is familiar with, and greatly influenced by, these urban areas. This is to say that people in this country no longer live in isolation, even those in rural areas, mostly because of the effects of mass media and technological advances in communication. More and more, the people of this country have come to share many of the same experiences; develop similar “national” characteristics; and become familiar with the customs, ideologies, and idiosyncrasies common to this nation and its various peoples. In other words, these United States of America have become urbanized. We are essentially an urban nation despite our rural beginnings.

Abner Cohen (1974) argues that urban anthropology must begin to take into account the fact that our society is becoming more and more urban. He writes, “In both the developed and the developing countries the city is today but a part of the national state. Economically, politically, demographically, and culturally it [the city] makes no sociological sense unless we study it within this wider context. Urban anthropology is indeed the anthropology of the complex structure of the new national state.” If this can be said of the city, the same may be said of our rural area. It is the urban character of the modern nation that makes urbanicity a national state of mind, if not a universal geographic phenomenon. This line of thought cannot be limited to anthropology. It is also the framework in which we must consider education.

The problems and opportunities of urban education,

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then, are not simply those related to education in our cities, but increasingly urban education must be defined as including education in what is rapidly becoming an urban nation. We must begin to understand urban education in reference to the "new national state." In other words, our study of urban education must take into account an understanding of urbanicity as one of the prime characteristics of the modern technological society.

There is a special quality to the interactions that are peculiar to urban communities—not that interactions do not occur in other communities, but the great concentrations of people, resources, sources of stimulation, money, and conflicts in the urban society provide interactions which have the potential for greatly influencing the developmental process in man. We once thought that what we identify as "human" in man is largely a product of some inborn pattern that simply unfolds to maturity. Increasingly, students of human behavior and social organization look to the interactions between whatever is given in an organism and whatever is given in the environmental situation in order to understand human development. To identify this as the source of the product of the social behavior, the personal behavior, the intellectual behavior or almost any aspect of behavior, the definition, the identification, the specification, and eventually the manipulation of those interactions may be the most crucial tool that man has for influencing the development of man. To ignore this leaves the developmental process largely to chance.

The environments in which people live have always influenced the course of their development. What is new is the broadened commonality of these environmental encounters; the increased awareness of incongruencies heightened by the temporal and spacial contiguity of pluralistic elements; and the requirement that individuals learn to adjust to and survive in varied and rapidly changing milieus. The richness of the urban environment and its potential for isolation, deprivation, and overstimulation confront us with interactions of tremendously positive and negative power and thus present us with a developmental paradox of contradiction.

Characteristic of all types of societies is the problem of contradiction. For every phenomenon, there is a positive side and a negative side. These opposites do not maintain their positions—they are dynamic. At one point one aspect of the contradiction may be in the ascendancy; at another point another aspect of the contradiction is in the ascendancy. The task of those of us who deal creatively with contradiction is to understand those relative positions, the ways in which those relative positions can be utilized for particular goals, and the ways in which those relative positions cannot be changed but must be adapted to.

The urban setting is one of conflicting pressures—congruency and incongruency. Just as there are diverse positions, there are conflicts of interest, lack of congruency between the interests of one group and those of another. When we talk about large and congested populations and, in addition, diverse populations, we must talk about the lack of congruence between the many subgroups that make up these populations. Incongruence between the various elements of the society, then, is a special characteristic of urbanicity.

Different social and political groups may become more isolated from one another in the urban situation than in less complex societies, in part because the numbers in each group increase significantly. The sense of community and

the necessity for it may outweigh the diversity of opinions in rural settings; whereas in urban settings, the large membership of each group allows different social communities to develop in isolation around different values. Thus contamination in adherence to values across group lines becomes less, as differences of opinion lead to group identity in urban society. Multiplicity of values, multiplicity of cultural forms, and multiplicity of interests, for example, are reflected in the social adaptability of the people in this country. In addition, social adaptation is closely tied to people's position in society. Yet, for a society to move ahead smoothly as well as for development to move smoothly in individuals, a sense of congruence, of fitting together, of orchestration, must be experienced. Adaptation then becomes an issue. Certainly as society becomes more closely knit, as people become more interdependent, and influence each other more, their lives become more and more dependent upon successful adaptation to each other. The capacity to adapt and readapt in the face of contradiction and change emerges as a crucial survival skill in the urban society. Alvin Toffler talks about this concept in the context of adapting to change. Perhaps adaptation in relation to change, if we follow Toffler, may be the most important skill that we need to develop in man, as we become more urbanized and more and more interdependent.

The members of a modern society come to be more and more uniformly influenced by the predominant trends of that society. We can think of urbanicity in this context. A youngster growing up in rural Mississippi with TV, radio, and various other forms of communication and transportation, is not as uninfluenced by what happens in Kansas City, Chicago, or New York as we once thought. Adaptation, then, to those varieties of inputs, which are a function of the fact that even though we have urban and rural areas everyone is influenced by the urban domination of society, becomes of crucial importance. In order to exist in this society, we must all develop the capacity to adapt, to utilize ourselves in purposefully creative ways in response to the varieties of inputs, the varieties of stimuli that are increasingly present.

Continuity and change present problems in urban areas. Large, dense populations with their growing sense of anonymity tend to lose the control over individual behavior which was possible in the small rural community. The possibility for change then is ever present. At the same time, the weight of the organization—the bureaucracy that has been established to maintain the system—becomes a countervailing force toward conformity, even though individuals can get lost in the system and thus have the freedom to be erratic. Man needs continuity in his experiences, but the essence of growth or movement is the function of the tension that exists in the system between the old and the new. In other words, there has to be an awareness of the possibility for change in order to stimulate the kind of movement that individuals need in order to grow, develop, and be creative.

As the magnitude and the density of the population increases and as the impact of the population on those individuals in society increases, identity, individualization, and group survival come into conflict. We are a nation that has given high priority through most of our history to the concept of individuality—the independence of the individual and autonomous behavior. Yet, as our society becomes more urbanized and more congested, and as

population density increases, it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain "my" identity, protect "my" rights to individuality at the same time that we do something about the problems of collective need and group survival.

In his very interesting work, *A Theory of Justice*, Rawls (1971) argues that justice cannot be said to exist when the rights of one individual are violated to serve the purposes or ends of a larger segment of the society. What we are increasingly confronted with is the problem of reconciling different needs and values which may be contradictory or where the achievement of one set of needs is counterproductive to the achievement of another. As people congregate in larger numbers and these contradictory positions become more obvious, traditional democratic strategies based upon majority rule may not be relevant. Urbanicity may force us to learn new ways of social organization and governance.

Urban existence makes the issue of *critical mass* very important. One of the greatest problems of an urban society has to do with the establishment, maintenance and the control of the utilization of the mass of resources—whether we talk of human resources or technological resources, a mass that is sufficient to make a difference in the society or to make a difference in the life of a person. Identifying the level of the magnitude of the mass necessary to particular processes and the ways in which that mass may be and needs to be manipulated either to produce effective education or effective health service or effective religious or political organization, is of critical concern for a nation that has become urban.

Against the background of these characteristics and problems of urbanicity, what then are its central features which have particular implications for education? There follow three broad categories which have special relevance for urban education: human diversity, human mobility, and human and institutional rigidity.

My own concern with the first category, diversity of human characteristics, developed out of my concern with low ethnic and low economic status populations. In earlier work great attention was given to the characteristics of these populations and the ways in which they differ from the so-called majority population. As that work progressed, we have come to realize that it was in error. The article published in the *Review of Educational Research* (1965), in which I discussed some of the characteristics of disadvantaged people, was inappropriate; not simply in the sense that it stigmatized those people by calling them "culturally disadvantaged," but, even more important, by asserting that they represented a relatively homogeneous group. They do not. They have poverty and low status and certain kinds of neglect and maltreatment as common characteristics, but in terms of the functional characteristics for that population, their characteristics vary as much within these groups as they do between the lower and higher status groups.

An increasingly urgent problem of urban communities, therefore, is the fact of the diversity of human characteristics. We must examine that diversity. Perhaps those characteristics we have previously judged to be important—that is, ethnic status and class status—may only be important for pedagogical purposes. If the task is to organize the learning experiences of Johnny Jones, I am less convinced in 1977 than I was in 1965 that knowing his ethnicity or class background is sufficient. Far more important is knowing how that youngster goes about solving

social and intellectual problems. In psychology we call that affective and cognitive style. Some people approach tasks in the abstract, and other people are totally at a loss when they are confronted with an abstract problem, but depend on concrete representation—on things they can touch or taste, hear or see. Some people approach tasks globally, that is they have the ability to quickly assess an entire situation and deal with it. Other people have to deal with small details—pieces of the whole.

There is a relatively highly developed body of knowledge that relates to the ways in which people differ in functional aspects of both intellectual and social behavior. That knowledge has not crept into the practice of education. Our concern has been with populations that we know to differ on broad characteristics of social status (social, economic, sex, ethnicity), but these status characteristics may not supply sufficient information to adequately provide for educational planning. Perhaps we need to give more attention to differences in the functional characteristics which better inform instruction.

A category of functional characteristics which has received considerable study is temperament. Birch, Chess, and Thomas have spent the last twenty years working on problems of the temperamental differences in children. Their research suggests that there are characteristics of temperament that are identifiable in children at about three months of age. As a youngster progresses through the years—they have followed their population through the nineteenth year—those same temperaments, identified in the early years, still dominate in the behavior of these now young adults. Birch and Gordon worked with newborn infants. They found what are perhaps the precursors of temperament expressed in the very first hours of children's lives. If correct, it may be that one person's deliberate, analytic, slow-to-arrive-at-a-decision temperament, as opposed to another's tendency to be impulsive, and quick to arrive at a decision—synergistic rather than analytic—is a characteristic that is a function of the way in which the nervous system is organized.

In their book, Thomas et al. (1968) suggest that perhaps as much as 50 percent of the learning problems and behavior disorders of youngsters are a function of a failure to achieve a match between their temperamental traits and the temperamental demands of recurrent learning situations. In other words, if a youngster is a quick, impulsive child, who moves with dispatch in whatever he does, and a parent or teacher is deliberate, analytical, slow and constantly holds back the child, that youngster may be educated and socialized to his disadvantage. His strength is not being built upon but rather a pattern which is atypical for him is being forced. The opposite situation is also true. A youngster may have the same capacity to comprehend as any other, but is handicapped, disadvantaged, maltreated because the learning environment is at variance with his dominant temperamental traits.

There is a broad body of research relating to temperament, interest, and cognitive style, but this knowledge is not being adequately integrated into educational procedures. As important as it is to give greater attention to the social-cultural characteristics of young people in the pattern of their educational experiences, we must begin to give even more attention to those functional characteristics which inform the educational process. Diversity of human characteristics, then, becomes of very important concern.

This concern with diversity increases in importance as

populations increase in size and density. In simpler and smaller groups, time and circumstances permit greater freedom to find one's way. In the slower, less pressured traditional communities, there seems to have been greater capacity to tolerate behavioral deviance. True, there were limits to this tolerance, but feelings of familiarity, kinship, and community seem to have made for greater readiness to absorb mild degrees and amounts of atypicality. The urban community, on the other hand, seems to provide more resources for dealing with diversity but less supportive tolerance. The tolerance of difference associated with urbanicity tends to be tolerance by isolation and neglect. There is just so much going on that needs attention that nobody notices, and too often nobody cares. Diversity increases and nurturant toleration decreases.

Related to human diversity is a concern for pluralism. While our population differs widely in its characteristics, it also differs in its values. And though at one period of our history we had a kind of amalgamation with respect to standards and values, we are increasingly becoming a pluralistic society in which many values and many standards exist in parallel. A pluralistic society that plans to give attention to the development of people not only must take into account the diversities in characteristics that people bring to the developmental situation, but also the society must help people develop against the background of the variety of standards and criteria suggested by the outcomes to which peoples' various behaviors are directed. That variation in outcomes and values is a fact of life; yet, one needs in urban society to be able to function against the criteria of the broader group as well as the criteria of multiple settings. We cannot prepare a youngster to live only in rural Texas, because we know that in his lifetime he may spend his childhood in San Francisco, work and mature in New York, and die in Portland. After all, several of our Presidents have been born and spent their childhoods in very remote and isolated parts of this country. Yet when they function as President, they are expected to reflect the collective sophistication and wisdom of our metropolises. We cannot socialize a person to only one set of standards when we know that in the course of that person's life she/he is going to have to exist in a variety of other cultural settings that make different kinds of demands for adaptation. In a pluralistic society, then, people must be taught how to exist in and adapt to a variety of different situations. Thus, pluralism in a society presents tremendously important problems for education which we have not yet tackled.

A second characteristic of urbanicity which has implications for education is population mobility—or actually, mobility and immobility. The problem basically refers to geographic mobility and social immobility. Clearly, as our urban nation advances, the fact of physical movement becomes increasingly possible for people. Not only is there physical mobility, but there is psychological mobility. We can sit in Omaha and observe now by television something that is happening in London, or almost anywhere in the world. It may be—given the capacity of human beings to deal with vicarious experience—that those vicarious and artificially created mobilities have the same importance in the development of persons as that of physical mobility. Physical mobility encompasses both the capacity of the society to put people in a variety of settings and the requirements of those settings that people adapt to them. This is cultural mobility.

Social mobility is a related phenomenon. In the early development of this country there were vast open spaces, relatively undeveloped industries, opportunities for relatively unsophisticated people to quickly rise to political position. Movement up and down the social scale was a fact of life. The Horatio Alger myth—that is, the capacity of persons to move from very low status to very high achievement in our society—is still possible, but it is so rare as to be a misleading assertion of opportunity for youngsters in this country. The number of people who can actually move from very low beginnings on to high status in our society is very, very limited. In addition, it is questionable whether the opportunities for upward mobility were ever as great as the myth claimed they were. But it is certainly true that it was easier to make a fortune or achieve high status in some areas of the country in the 1800s than it is in the late 1900s.

The fact that we are more and more subjected to caste status—that is, relatively fixed social position—becomes an important issue as we begin to think about the impact now of opportunity development on the development of individuals in an urban nation. Ogbu has written about the way in which the perception of opportunity for upward mobility may be related to education. If one perceives that one's chances for movement in the society, and for the utilization of the things that one invests one's efforts in, in education, are rather slight or not as good as those of another group in society, then the effort made to get equally involved in that educational opportunity is viewed as futile. In other words, if we recognize that the unemployment rate for black youths in this country is about 30 to 40 percent and sometimes approaches 50 percent, and if we talk to those youngsters about the opportunities that this country provides if they do their homework, we are being dishonest and they know it. In order to truly improve education, then, we may have to involve ourselves in changing the opportunity structure that those youngsters perceive, since without doing so, we cannot adequately involve them in the educational process.

Fluidity and rigidity is the final category to be discussed. As societies become more compressed, more urbanized, they almost automatically develop structures to regulate themselves—bureaucracies. One of the functions of the bureaucracy, one of the functions of institutions of social control, is stability. There must be enough stability for efficient management. Stability in the hands of human beings most often gets reflected as rigidity. We are creatures of habit, and getting us to change a decision, a behavior, an organization or an opportunity structure becomes very difficult. Yet, if there were no system, no structure, no bureaucracy in urban societies, they would fall apart. We pay the price of rigidity for that stability, which makes it difficult for these same institutions to be flexible enough to serve the varied interests of diverse populations. Diversity and rigidity then represent contradictory forces.

In New York City, for instance, there is no lack of understanding in the educational system for the needs of the diverse students in it. But the translation of that understanding into direct services for students, mediated by a bureaucracy that is intent upon protecting itself and protecting that system, creates a rigidity in the behavior of that institution that makes it impossible to adequately serve youngsters. We must find some way of dealing with that kind of institutional rigidity, since the more we become urbanized, the more bureaucracy, the more structure, and the more rigidity we are going to have. And, the

increasing rigidity of the system is counterproductive of the things to which we in education are supposedly committed.

Rigidity is also a characteristic of the behavior of individuals. In our highly advanced society, we have more knowledge, more technology than we use. Take smoking for example. Few people in this country are unaware of the deleterious effects smoking has on the health of the person who smokes, as well as on those who must breathe the smoke in the air, yet millions continue to smoke. Getting people to use the information and change their behavior to correspond with the new knowledge is a terribly difficult task. Those of us who teach know that one of the poorest ways of helping people to understand is to preach to them; yet we continue to use exhortation.

This type of rigidity is evident in education—since the teachers and administrators are human. For example, in Pittsburgh, Robert Glazer instituted an individually prescribed instruction program. The IPI is an innovative step in the development of education, but as I went from classroom to classroom, I found the teachers using the best materials—materials that are sensitive to differential rates of learning—but using those materials in the same way they had used their previous materials, that is, in teaching groups of thirty children. In other words, the behavior simply did not follow the understanding of the technology that was available.

It may be that we hold on to the familiar, that which we know, out of a need for security. This tends to occur even in the absence of threat. When orientation and security are threatened either by the introduction of the new or by other changed circumstances, the tendency is to more deeply entrench the present pattern.

One of the facts, then, of human behavior is its rigidity. And unless we find ways to make us more flexible, we are going to serve the goals of education less well. However, one big advantage of large populations, and of the anonymity that comes with this, is the freedom for individuals to "do their own thing." In a small setting it is difficult to do anything different and not be noticed or even restrained. One of the advantages, then, of urbanicity is that it does provide for greater individual freedom. One of the disadvantages is that the weight of it, the rigidity of it, makes the expression of that freedom far more difficult.

One of the great scholars, W. E. B. Dubois, wrote early in this century that the problem of the twentieth century was the problem of the color line. But just before he left the country, in 1960, DuBois said that he had changed that position. Not that he thought that color was unimportant, but that he thought that there were other differences between people that were of greater importance. Primary among them, he said, was the problem of politics and economics. He suggested that until we begin to appreciate the interplay between the politics of a society, the economics of that society, and the fact that differences between the members of that society exist, we are not going to make much progress.

It may be that what we do in education, urban or non-urban, over the next few years may be more greatly influenced by things that happen in the political/economic sphere—what we do in efforts at controlling, anticipating, manipulating, and utilizing the political economy of the society—than the things that we do in education itself. For example, we must be cognizant of a force like the influx of the strategies of organized labor into the pedagogical pro-

cesses and the educational system. What has happened in New York City is that despite the fact that the state law places responsibility for educational policy making in the hands of lay board members, in essence, policy is made by the United Federation of Teachers. Nothing happens in that system without the approval of the UFT. It is not that we are against unions, but as unionism becomes a new force for reaction or conservatism, serving the private interests of workers rather than the collective interests of the children and their education, we are in trouble. That is a problem of politics and economics. In addition, unless we can bring monetary resources to bear on the problems of education, where necessary, we are not going to solve them. The problems of education in this country are not going to be solved with expenditures of \$2 billion of federal money and \$100 billion totally across the country, for example—it is just not enough. The estimate of what would be required to provide good education in this country, made ten years ago without the latest rates of inflation, was about \$100 billion. Today it may well be \$150 billion. Until we can begin to allocate that kind of money, adjusted for inflation, the best of our ability, and the best of our professional and technological resources to the problems of education—all this in a society that has become urban with all of its problems and all of its advantages—we will not be very successful.

The fact of shrinking resources is a problem for all urban centers right now. It is probably most exacerbated in New York City, but the mayors of cities around the country have alerted us to the fact that serious financial complications are just ahead for these cities also. Some economists are suggesting that what we see happening in the cities is simply a precursor of the financial difficulties we will be facing on a national scale. Not only have costs greatly increased and appear to be continuing to escalate, but the willingness of people to support education and other public services through their taxes is declining. Therefore in thinking about the economic issues, not only are costs higher and continuing to rise and financial need greater than the amount of money currently assigned to it, but the combination of the growing problem and the changing climate of support for education, or for public services in general, suggests that the economic base from which we could anticipate producing the money that is needed is disintegrating. We see then, that the financial plight of the cities is also the plight of all government units in the country.

All of this is further complicated by the recent advent of multinational corporations, which are depriving national governments of source of income. Not only are sources of income decreasing, but the more developed countries are also being deprived of sources of employment. As the denials of public services in these settings increase and the capacity to raise money through the taxation of people decreases, the cost of providing a service like education in a highly complex society is rising at the same time that the available resources to meet these costs are diminishing.

What then are the major issues confronting urban education and by which this field may be defined? The environment in which urban education exists is marked by *contradiction*. The paradox of the urban environment is that it is most inhibiting at the same time that it is most liberating. This paradox includes a number of polarities such as extreme differences in people, life space, in conditions of life, and in the concentration of power and

resources. The polarities can be traced from the individual's need to be both anonymous and a member of a small restricted group, to the possibility of institutions being either most open to change or most rigid. It can be observed in school systems which include the most advanced and the most retrogressive. This paradoxical phenomenon of contradiction is a key feature of the urban community and is a key to understanding urban education. A definition of urban education, or the mapping of its domain, must include the cultural, economic, geographic, political, psychological, and sociological paradoxes of contradiction inherent in urbanicity.

The urban community is characterized by *collectivity*, the idea that the urban setting forces people to be identified with, and by, groups to a greater degree than do nonurban environments. Increased competition for resources and power in the urban arena can focus on the school and exacerbate the need for and function of collectivities, whether these collectivities are formed on the basis of conceptions of ethnicity, shared normative behaviors, religious culture, or other interests. The idea of collectivities includes the concepts of membership, the individual within the group, communication and support networks, geographic and political locations, status and function.

Urban institutions, as are most institutions, are characterized by *rigidity*, that is a stronger commitment to the maintenance of the status quo than to change. As populations and complexities of organization increase, bureaucracies develop and become entrenched. Again the paradox. Bigness and complexity demand flexibility, but to function and survive complex societies and their institutions must have continuity, consistency, and stability. Not only are these institutions characterized by rigidity, but the people they serve show rigidity in their behavior; adaptation and change are hard to come by.

Urban populations are diverse and mobile and at the same time stereotypic and immobile. These populations vary with respect to their status (ethnicity, culture, class, sex) and their functions (language, cognitive style, affective response patterns, etc.). These differences have important implications for the ways in which educational opportunities are designed and delivered. Yet these various groups are eventually held to similar mainstream standards despite the pluralistic nature of their idiosyncratic reference groups. Those populations seem to be in constant geographic movement within the city and into and out of the city, yet between groups movement is very limited and upward mobility more a dream than a reality.

In essence pedagogy is pedagogy in rural and urban settings; but education, as the process by which pedagogical experiences and opportunities are designed, developed, and implemented, is greatly influenced by the social context in which it exists. In urban education attention must be given to these and other aspects of urbanicity. As the nation becomes more urban, all education is significantly influenced by this phenomenon.

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